



August 2011

Dear Westford Residents,



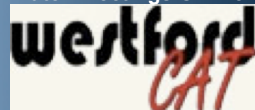
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Thank you to the Westford Museum for providing special tours of the exhibits for town employees this month.

Special Town Meeting is October 17, 2011.

Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Visit
www.westfordma.gov
for current news and
information.

On July 14th, 2011, Police Sergeant Mark Chambers and Officer James Connolly saved the life of a woman passing through our town by their quick and valiant efforts performing CPR while awaiting the ambulance. These officers were awarded the Police Department's Life Saving Award and were recognized by the Board of Selectmen at their August 9th meeting. Their actions were just another example of the professionalism and commitment to excellence of our entire police department.

I would like to extend a special thank you to The Gutierrez Company and Verc Enterprises, Inc for contributing to the intersection improvements that will soon be underway at Minot's corner. These donations will greatly help the town to pay for costs that are not covered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

On Wednesday August 31st at 7:00 p.m. at the J.V. Fletcher Library, 50 Main Street, we have scheduled an "All Boards" public meeting to discuss the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail parking issues. As the town has no parking areas adjacent to the trail, the users of the trail had been parking along Route 27, creating a public safety hazard for both themselves and other vehicles passing by. We are inviting all boards to attend, along with trail abutters and the general public to discuss this very important issue. We will be posting documents related to this issue on our website as they become available.

Our fall Special Town Meeting has been scheduled for Monday, October 17, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the Abbot School Gymnasium. Please mark your calendars for this important event – your voice and your vote are needed. We hope to see you there. Citizen petition articles are due to the Town Clerk's office by September 7th.

Representative Arciero and Senator Donoghue held their annual summer barbeque at the Cameron Senior Center with our town seniors. This event provides our seniors with a venue to discuss any of their concerns with our state officials. Once again, both our Representative and our Senator told the crowd they also welcome emails and telephone calls from our residents, when questions or concerns arise.

There will be a memorial ceremony on September 11, 2011 on our town common that is being orchestrated by a group of volunteer residents. It promises to be a memorable event and the group is seeking donations for a permanent granite bench to memorialize the tragic events of that day. Please consult their website for more information:
<http://westford.com/911/>.

At their August 9th meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to extend my contract with the town until June 30, 2014. Thank you to the board, and to all of you who have called, emailed or dropped by to congratulate me on the extension. I look forward to continuing to serve our wonderful town for the next 3 years.

Sincerely,



Town Manager's Newsletter

HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEWS

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Westford Mosquito Tests Positive for West Nile Virus

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) informed the Health Department on 8/17/11 that a mosquito collected from Westford, tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The mosquito was found as part of the arbovirus surveillance program offered through the MDPH and the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP), which monitors WNV activity.

The mosquitoes that carry the virus, the *Culex* species is common throughout the state.

The West Nile Virus grows in birds and is transmitted from bird to bird and from birds to humans by mosquitoes. Horses bitten by mosquitoes carrying WNV can also become sick.

WNV is spread only by adult mosquitoes that are infected with the virus. The risk of getting the disease is greatest from July through September but remains through October or until the first frost.

Less than 1% of people who are infected by the virus become seriously ill with complications such as WNV encephalitis or meningitis. Those most vulnerable to serious complications include those over 50, the very young, and those who are immune-compromised. Most people will not exhibit any symptoms. A small percentage develop fevers, headache and body aches, often with a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. Many infected persons do not seek treatment because the symptoms are flu-like and mild. There is no vaccine or treatment for the WNV infection but the symptoms of WNV encephalitis can be treated.

The Health Department urges residents to always protect themselves and pets against mosquito bites by taking the following precautions.

- Avoid Mosquito Bites
- Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours - The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- Clothing Can Help reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus has also demonstrated efficacy against mosquito bites, with protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET, but should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.
- Apply only as much repellent as needed. Choose a product that will provide sufficient protection for the amount of time that you will be spending outdoors. Saturation does not increase repellent efficacy. Product labels often indicate the length of time that you can expect protection from a product. Keep repellents away from eyes, nostrils and lips. Do not inhale or ingest repellents or get them into the eyes. Avoid applying repellents to portions of children's hands that are likely to have contact with eyes or mouth. Never use repellents on wounds or irritated skin. Wash repellent-treated skin after coming indoors.
- Mosquito-Proof Your Home
- Drain Standing Water - Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water including trash cans and recycle bins. Poke holes in tire swings so water drains out. Turn over wheelbarrows. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools. Change water in birdbaths and dog bowls frequently. Aerate ornamental ponds and stock them with fish. Check rain gutters and drains. Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property.
- Install or Repair Screens - Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.
- For additional information, call the MDPH recorded information line at 1-866- MASS -WNV or www.mass.gov/dph/wnv. For information on mosquito spraying or testing in our area, contact the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project @ 508-393-3055 between 7AM -3:30 PM Monday-Friday or log on to www.cmmcp.org.



The Atlantic Hurricane season is upon us, whether we experience any major hurricanes or serious thunderstorms this season being prepared and taking necessary major storm safety precautions is advised in keeping yourself safe. The following safety tips will assist you in assuring your safety during a major storm.

- Have flashlights and extra batteries available when the power goes out. Observe candle safety rules for candle fires have doubled in the past decade. Never leave burning candles unattended or in low areas where pets or small children could come in contact. Candles need space and should be in appropriate candleholders.
- Check to make sure your smoke alarms are in working order. Should you not have battery back up smoke alarms we recommend you install some battery smoke alarms.
- Carbon Monoxide alarms protect your family from the Silent Killer. Check to make sure your CO alarms are in working order and you have one on each level of your home and within 10 feet of bedroom doors.
- Use of Generators outdoors only. Generators and other fuel-powered machines should be used outside the home and away from windows or vents. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors. Generators are not to be operated in enclosed spaces or garages where CO can accumulate.
- Alternative cooking appliances. Do not use a charcoal or propane grill inside the home, including Coleman or similar type's stoves or lamps. This could pose a carbon monoxide or an explosion hazard.
- Natural Gas Safety. Should you smell or hear leaky gas or you believe there is a gas leak (smells like rotten eggs) leave immediately and leave the doors open. DO NOT turn electrical switches or appliances on or off and Call 911.
- Remember Water and Electricity Do Not Mix! Watch for downed wires and always treat down wires as "LIVE". Electrocuting or serious electrical burns can be caused by just approaching a down wire. Be sure to explain this to younger children.
- Do not venture into a flooded basement should outlets or the fuse box be under water, it could electrically charge the water and electrocute you.
- Charge up your cell phone battery in advance but remember to limit your use for during a storm power outages can affect cell towers causing your cell phone to roam using battery power. Excessive calls during a storm can also jam the airwaves, which could affect emergency responder communications.

Please follow these simple safety measures to keep yourself and family safe during a storm. Never hesitate to call 911 should you have an emergency but we do ask you for your cooperation in avoiding non-emergency calls to police and fire during a storm.

Donald R. Parsons
Fire Prevention Officer



Cross-Connections

This information is presented as part of the Water Department's Cross-Connection Educational Program. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requires that public water suppliers reach out to residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, and municipal users to explain the importance of protecting the water supply from the dangers of cross-connections.

What is a Cross-Connection?

A cross connection is defined as any direct connection between the public water supply and a non-potable water source or contaminant (potable water is fit for consumption, regulated, and regularly tested for safety whereas non-potable water is not). For example, take the seemingly innocent garden hose. When the hose is attached to a chemical sprayer or submerged in a swimming pool a physical connection is then established between the public water supply and a potentially hazardous source – in this case lawn or pool chemicals.

What makes the cross-connection a potential hazard?

The answer is hydraulics. A cross-connection can introduce contaminants from a non-potable source (such as the chemical sprayer or swimming pool mentioned above) into the public water supply by either back siphonage or backflow. Back siphonage occurs when there is a sudden surge in water use - usually due to hydrant flow, main break, etc. resulting in a reversal of normal flow downstream due to negative pressure (think of how a straw works to sip a drink). Backpressure – and resulting reversal of flow - can occur when downstream pressure exceeds the supply pressure. Regardless of the means, reversal of water flow can introduce contaminants into the public water supply if there is a physical connection to a non-potable source.

Does this really happen?

There have been instances (not in Westford thankfully!) where contaminants such as pesticides, caustics, boiler chemicals, and even blood have been introduced into a public water supply due to a lack of proper cross connection protection. Just recently, hydro seeding chemicals were introduced into the Somerset public water supply after a company illegally connected to a fire hydrant. The pressure in the hydro seeding truck tank exceeded that of the public supply (backpressure) causing the material to flow into the main. Fortunately, no one became sick.

What does the Westford Water Department (Department) do about cross-connections?

The Westford Water Department maintains a robust cross-connection control program as required by the MassDEP. This program consists of surveying all facilities serviced by the Department for cross-connections, regular inspection of all installed backflow prevention devices, and educational outreach to customers regarding the importance of cross-connection elimination and protection. Additionally, the Department has a Total Containment Policy which means that all facilities served by town water must have backflow protection at the meter to isolate that facility from the public water supply.

The Department requires that all facilities served by town water are equipped with appropriate backflow prevention devices where cross-connections exist. There are different types of devices to be used based on the degree of hazard present. Some devices are testable – whereas others are not.



Testable Devices:

Reduced Pressure Zone Backflow Device (RPZ). This type of device utilizes two check valves and a relief valve, and is designed for high-hazard uses.

Double Check Valve (DC): This type of device utilizes two check valves, but no relief valve, and is designed for low hazard uses such as for a fire sprinkler line.

Pressure Vacuum Breaker: This type of device utilizes one check valve, and is typically used in irrigation systems.

Air Gap. This is not a device, but a physical separation (of twice the diameter of the supply pipe and never less than 1 inch) between the potable water supply and the non-potable supply. Although not strictly a device, it is measurable. The air gap is extremely effective but limited to uses where downstream system pressure is not required.

Not Testable:

Hose Bibb Vacuum Breaker: This is a small, inexpensive device available at most hardware stores that can be attached to the sill cock (your outside tap) before the garden hose. It's used to prevent back siphonage, and is a simple way to protect against garden hose cross-connections.

Residential Dual-Check: This device is installed after the meter, and offers reliable protection against back siphonage and backpressure. As the name implies, it is used for residential applications.

What can Customers do?

Provide Water Department personnel access to your facility during regular business hours (when requested) to perform required cross-connection surveys and backflow prevention device inspections (normally, surveys and inspections of residences are only needed if there is a fire sprinkler system installed).

Comply with Massachusetts Plumbing Codes to ensure all cross-connections are protected with the appropriate device (a licensed plumber should be able to provide assistance). However, if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the Water Department at 978-692-5529.

A simple and inexpensive way for residential customers to protect against back siphonage from their garden hose is to install the hose bibb vacuum breaker described above. The peace of mind in protecting your supply is worth a few bucks.



Veterans News

Thanks to Senator John Kerry, the Veteran's Corner located in the 2nd floor library of the Cameron Senior Center recently got a big boost with some great reading material.

From the Senator's press release: "The Veteran's Book Corner, initiated by the Westford Women's Club, aims to provide access to free books that may be of interest to area veterans. Their collection includes a variety of biographies and memoirs, as well as fiction and non-fiction works emphasizing themes from the nation's military eras." Ref: <http://kerry.senate.gov/press/release/?id=2bf8c9e7-61be-4662-87c5-4aa44313f73e>

The Westford Women's Club also received a large collection of books from individual local veterans who worked to provide the initial seed of books. Many thanks to those that have contributed.

When you get a chance, stop by and take a look at the books in the Veteran's Corner lending library.

Library News

In the current climate of fiscal uncertainty, check out how the Fletcher Library offers community support via free access to topical, online databases; the following database is one of many that you can connect to from the comfort of your home or office, or use when you next visit the library.

Ferguson's Career Guidance Center. This database profiles more than 3,300 of today's most exciting jobs in more than 94 industries. It also contains in-depth job descriptions complete with job-specific resource listings, detailed industry descriptions, career resources, career preparation information (including scholarships, academic programs, and non-academic programs) and web resources.

To access this awesome database (and many more) go to www.westfordlibrary.org. Scroll down the left hand side of the page and click on "Databases." You will have the option to view a comprehensive list of databases which can be searched by subject or alphabetically.

And for those families with children preparing for College Applications, do we have a database for you! Specifically, is there a high school student in your home who is stressed out about having to take various SAT tests? Well, the Library has a subscription to a Learn-a-Test Database which is a "practice test" resource.

It is accessible from home (with your Westford Library card) or at the Library. Practice taking SAT & AP exams, middle school skills improvement, resume and interviewing success skills, and much more.

Follow the "Databases" link from our web page. Click on "Test Taking" and you will see a description and links to this database. The first time you log on, you will be prompted to create a username and password to save your tests from session to session. If you need assistance, please contact the Information Services Desk.